

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 /077 W

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R 110956Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7904

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: ISRAELI REACTIONS TO REPORTS OF NEAR
AGREEMENT ON INTERIM SETTLEMENT

SUMMARY: ISRAELI MEDIA AUGUST 10-11 HIGHLIGHTS
WASHINGTON-BASED REPORTS THAT NEGOTIATIONS FOR
INTERIM AGREEMENT ARE NEARING SUCCESSFUL CON-
CLUSION, AND THAT SECRETARY PLANS NEW MIDDLE
EAST SHUTTLE NEXT WEEK. PRESS AUGUST 11 NOTES
THAT CABINET WAS IN AGREEMENT ON SUBSTANCE OF
CURRENT NEGOTIATING PROPOSALS PRESENTED BY NEG-
OTIATING TEAM, BUT FIVE MINISTERS HAD DOUBTS AS
TO TACTIC OF "OFFICIAL OPTIMISM" GIVEN CONTINUING
GAP IN EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI POSITIONS ON SEVERAL KEY
ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. ON UNIFORMLY OPTIMISTIC NOTE ALL ISRAELI MEDIA
AUGUST 10 REPORTED THAT INTERIM AGREEMENT WAS ON
VERGE OF BEING CONCLUDED. PRESS OPTIMISM WAS
MAINLY BASED ON A) WASHINGTON BASED REPORTS THAT
SECRETARY WAS ABOUT TO ANNOUNCE ANOTHER MIDDLE
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EAST SHUTTLE MISSION B) ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THREE

ISRAELI DELEGATIONS WOULD GO TO WASHINGTON THIS WEEK AND C) REPORTED REMARKS BY US OFFICIALS THAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES HAD SUBSTANTIALLY NARROWED AND AGREEMENT WAS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN. JERUSALEM POST HEADLINE CLAIMED THAT US OFFICIALS EXPECTED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WOULD BE CONCLUDED BY SEPTEMBER 1. GENERAL OPTIMISM ABOUT AGREEMENT POSSIBILITIES WAS SUSTAINED BY ABSENCE OF DENIALS FROM JERUSALEM OFFICIALS.

2. AFTER 5-HOUR CABINET MEETING AUGUST 10, GOI ISSUED LACONIC COMMUNIQUE STATING THAT CABINET "TOOK NOTE" OF NEGOTIATING TEAM RESPONSE TO LATEST EGYPTIAN POSITIONS AND THAT TEAM WILL CONTINUE WITH NEGOTIATIONS. MEDIA REPORTS THAT FIVE MINISTERS (YAACOBI, BURG, RAPHAEL, HAUSNER, AND HILLEL) AT CABINET MEETING HAD QUESTIONED WISDOM OF "OFFICIALLY INSPIRED OPTIMISM" RECENTLY EMANATING FROM JERUSALEM. LANDAU (POST) STATES THAT THERE WAS NO EXPLICIT DISAGREEMENT AMONG MINISTERS ON SUBSTANCE OF PROPOSALS ADVANCED BY NEGOTIATING TEAM, BUT SEVERAL MINISTERS WERE CONCERNED THAT DIFFERENCES OVER TACTICS MIGHT DEVELOP INTO DIFFERENCES OVER SUBSTANCE AS TALKS ENTERED CRITICAL LAST STAGE.

3. PRESS ALSO HAS HIGHLIGHTED WASHINGTON BASED REPORTS THAT SECRETARY IS PLANNING TO COME TO MIDDLE EAST SOMETIME NEXT WEEK, RECALLING HIS PLEDGE TO COME ONLY IF AGREEMENT WAS 90PERCENT CONCLUDED. SOME MINISTERS REPORTEDLY HAVE QUESTIONED WHETHER NEGOTIATIONS HAVE REACHED THIS STAGE, WITH ONE "WELL-PLACED OBSERVER" REPORTEDLY SAYING THAT IT MUST BE SOLELY FOR SECRETARY TO JUDGE THIS MATTER, AND THAT ISRAEL HAD NO OPTION BUT TO WELCOME HIM.

4. ACCORDING TO PRESS, BASIC DIFFERENCES STILL REMAIN TO BE RESOLVED ON NUMBER OF KEY ISSUES INCLUDING LOCATION OF WITHDRAWAL LINE, MANNING OF WARNING STATIONS, SIZE AND SCOPE OF AMERICAN PRESENCE, EXTENT OF FORWARD MOVEMENT OF EGYPTIAN

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TROOPS, AND CERTAIN POLITICAL ASPECTS.

5. RABIN AT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH MEXICAN PRESIDENT AUGUST 10 CONFINED HIMSELF TO SAYING THAT THERE HAD BEEN "MOVEMENT" IN RECENT WEEKS, EMPHASIZING THAT HE PREFERRED NOT TO ENGAGE IN PUBLIC SPECULATION AS TO PROSPECTS FOR CONCLUDING AGREEMENT.

6. LIKUD LEADER MENAHEM BEGIN, AUGUST 11, RENEWED CALL FOR KNESSET POLITICAL DEBATE ON INTERIM AGREEMENT, (IT HAD BEEN TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR JULY 30) CHARGING THAT COMMENTATORS APPARENTLY HAD MORE INFORMATION RE NEGOTIATING TERMS THAT DID OPPOSITION. LIKUD EXECUTIVE IS SCHEDULED TO MEET THIS EVENING, AND UNDOUBTEDLY WILL RESTATE ITS REJECTION OF PROPOSED AGREEMENT.

7. EDITORIAL COMMENT IS DIVIDED ON PREDICTABLE LINES. MAPAM'S AL HAMISHMAR, FOR INSTANCE, NOTING THAT HOUR OF DECISION IS AT HAND, URGES THAT OUTCOME BE POSITIVE SINCE ISRAEL CANNOT AFFORD ALTERNATIVE OF NEW BREAKDOWN WHICH WOULD MEAN EITHER WAR OR SEVERE RIFT WITH US. RIGHT WING MAARIV ON OTHER HAND CHARGES THAT AGREEMENT IS BASED MAINLY ON FAR-REACHING ISRAELI CONCESSIONS WITH EGYPT CONTRIBUTING LITTLE TO BRIDGE GAP BETWEEN POSITIONS. ISRAEL, THE EDITORIAL CHARGES, HAS BEEN GRADUALLY MANEUVERED INTO ACCEPTING TERMS WHICH IT HAD REJECTED FIVE MONTHS AGO. ISRAEL NOW HAS AGREED TO STATIONING OF EGYPTIAN TROOPS IN PRESENT BUFFER ZONE, AND HAS GIVEN UP ITS DEMAND RE PRINCIPLE OF DEMILITARIZATION OF EVACUATED AREAS. ISRAELI PRESENCE IN PASSES WILL BE SYMBOLIC AT BEST. FINALLY, MAARIV STATES, ISRAEL HAS GIVEN UP ITS DEMAND NOT TO LINK INTERIM AGREEMENT TO FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA.
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